Robertson News



Mrs. Courtney, Editor

Principal: Mr. Wolf Secretary: Mrs. Hegenauer

December, 2015
Volume 11, Issue 4

Message From the Principal's Desk

We are looking forward to seeing all of our parents/ guardians for our first term report card conferences on December 1, 2 & 3!

Each year, the parent/guardian of nearly every single one of our students comes to Robertson to meet with their child's teacher during our report card conferences. Remember, conferences are an opportunity for you to work in partnership with



your child's teacher to improve the educational experience that your child has at Robertson. When each of you shares what you know about your child's strengths and needs, you can form a plan, together, to help them.

Participating in your child's education is the single most powerful way to assure that they are successful in school. Attending the report card conference and working together with your child's teacher is one of the most important ways that you can participate in your child's education. This sends the message, "Your education is important to me," to your child.

I urge you to continue to be involved. We had nearly 300 parents attend our First Day event; we had a tremendous turnout at our Open House in October; and now you have the opportunity to participate at your child's report card conference.

Be sure to look for notices of PTA meetings and other

family events at school and plan to attend them. Our PTA uses the money it raises through fundraisers to support field trips and family events such as our Fall Festival, Parent Night Out and our Family Fun Run in the spring.

Participation in your child's education is not limited to attending an activity at school. In fact, that is just the beginning. For your involvement to have the greatest impact, it should take place at home also. Ask your child what they did at school each day; ask them if they have homework and what it is; let them know that you are there to support them and help them if they have a problem; tell them regularly how important it is to you that they work hard to do well in school.

When you get involved in your child's education and let your child see that you are involved, they take school seriously.

I wish all of the families in our Robertson Community a holiday season filled with peace, joy and the happiness that comes from the company of family and friends!

REPORT CARD CONFERENCE DATES: Tuesday, Wednesday, Thursday, December 1, 2 & 3. School is dismissed at 1:17 on all conference days.

Message From the Principal's Desk

Other important dates:

- December 9 1:17 p.m. dismissal for teacher prof. development;
- Winter Vacation no school December 24 through January 3.

Math News: Mrs. Legault

Students are excited about math this year! They are all working hard and learning all kinds of strategies to make math easier. We have a brand new math program this year called "enVision." All of you should have received a letter informing you of this and giving you your student's username and password. Please be patient, as this program is new for everyone, and we are still working out the "kinks."

On a side note, ALL students can be working on practicing their basic math facts. There are lots of great websites for them to practice.

During conference week, I will have a "Math Booth" set up in the front foyer. Please stop by to get some information about math or just to say hello!

Finally, please be on the lookout for a Parent Math Night event in the month of January. This will give parents the opportunity to experience what the "Math Workshop Model" is all about and also give you a glimpse into the new enVision Math Program.

HAPPY MATHING!



STEM News: Mrs. Gardner & Ms. Munoz

In STEM classes, Kindergarteners have been learning about shelters and how they protect us from weather. After listening to the stories of *The Three Little Pigs*, they created paper models of houses which the "Big Bad Wolf" (hair dryer) blew over like a big wind storm. Students used engineering skills and a variety of building materials to make changes to their houses so they would be able to stand up to the wind (wolf).

First graders have recently completed their unit on Forces and Motion. Our final project brought together everything we have learned about how things move. Students did an excellent job planning and conducting an investigation to answer the question, "Which object will move farthest when we blow on it?" Our data confirmed our hypothesis that light objects need less force to move them than heavy ones do!

Beginning our unit on Matter, second graders examined objects such as shells and beach stones and wrote their observations. They learned that if they write a clear, detailed descriptions and add diagrams with labels, they can better communicate their ideas to other scientists. This month, Mrs. Gardner is also teaming up with second grade classroom teachers in a unit on writing science lab reports.

Science Fair/Invention Convention

It is exciting to see so many students registered to participate in the Science Fair and Invention Convention this year! We will be communicating with you through both emails and notes sent home with your children. If you have questions, the best way to reach us is by email. For K-2 students, Mrs. Gardner's email is <u>b51lgard@mpspride.org</u> and for grades 3-5, Ms. Munoz's is <u>amunoz@mpspride.org</u>.

Our scientists have been working hard in grades 3, 4 & 5! This past month third grade focused on the Physical Properties of Objects. Students engaged in inquiry investigations related to buoyancy and solubility.

Fourth grade began exploring Electricity and Magnetism. Students learned how to put together electric circuits and discussed the different types of energies used to power machines.

Fifth grade students just completed their investigations focusing on Sound. Students conducted investigations to explore pitch, sound quality, vibrations and the movement of sound energy through a medium.

Message From the Principal's Desk, Cont'd.

ABSENCE NOTES

Please remember that whenever your child is absent from school, for any reason,



they must bring a note from their parent/guardian explaining the reason for their absence. It can be a simple note that states that they were ill.

Even if you call in and report the absence on our absence line, state law says that you must still send in a note when your child returns to school.

MANCHESTER PUBLIC SCHOOLS NON-DISCRIMINATION NOTICE

Manchester Public Schools does not discriminate in any employment practice, education program, or educational activity on the basis of race, color, religious creed, sex, age, national origin, ancestry, marital status, sexual orientation, gender identity or expression, disability (including, but not limited to, intellectual disability, past or present history of mental disorder, physical disability or learning disability), genetic information, or any other basis prohibited by Connecticut state and/or federal nondiscrimination laws. Manchester Public Schools' does not unlawfully discriminate in employment and licensing against qualified persons with a prior criminal conviction. Manchester Public Schools' is committed to a policy of equal opportunity/affirmative action for all qualified persons and equal access to Boy Scouts of America and other designated youth groups. Inquiries regarding Manchester Public Schools' nondiscrimination policies and practices should be directed to:

Terri Smith, Human Resources Specialist/Title IX Coordinator Manchester Public Schools, 45 North School Street Manchester, CT 06042, 860-647-3595

Shelly Matfess, Assistant
Superintendent for Pupil Personnel Services
Section 504 Co-Coordinator, Manchester Public Schools
45 North School Street, Manchester, CT 06042
860-647-3452

or

Linda Hodgkins, Coordinator of School Health Services Section 504 Co-Coordinator, Manchester Public Schools 45 North School Street, Manchester, CT 06042 860-647-3324

PARKING LOT SAFETY

Please use extreme caution when driving a vehicle through the school parking lots and on the streets nearby. In the morning before school and at dismissal time there are many people, both students and adults, walking along the sidewalks and IN the parking lots. Be sure to obey the posted signs.

Those spaces marked for handicapped parking, in both the back parking lot and the front, are only for vehicles displaying a state handicapped tag. Violation of any of the parking lot regulations can result in a costly fine from the Manchester Police Department. The police will focus their attention on school parking lots and the streets surrounding the schools this fall, to insure student safety.

Unfortunately, some vehicles were ticketed last year for violations.

The parking lot regulations are designed to keep our children safe. Please keep this in mind at all times.

Please remember that pick-up of students after school and drop off of students in the morning takes place in our *back parking lot*. School staff is on duty in the morning and afternoon to supervise.

The front parking lot is not to be used for the drop-off or pick-up of students. If you are running late in the morning (after 9:05) you may park in the front lot and walk your student into the school office to sign them in. If you arrive late in the afternoon (after 3:40) you may park in the front lot and



come into the school office to sign your student out.

The back parking lot is supervised by school staff from 8:35 – 9:05 every morning and from 3:25 – 3:40 every afternoon. The back doors are locked until 8:35 and after 9:05 so please do not drop a student off outside of that time frame.

Message From the Principal's Desk, Cont'd.

ROBERTSON WEB SITE

Be sure to check out the Robertson School Web Site! You can access this site at:



Student

Www.publicschools.manchester.gov

Then click on the *Schools* tab, find Robertson and click. It is a user-friendly site filled with helpful school information that includes curriculum outlines, an events calendar, PTA news, photos and much more. We are continuously updating this site and including more and more useful and interesting information.

PARENT/STUDENT HANDBOOK

Our complete Parent/Student Handbook is now available to you electronically on our Robertson Website. To access our website, please go to: publicschools.manchesterct.gov. Then click on

the Schools tab, find Robertson and click.

In addition to our Parent/Student Handbook, our website contains lots of other information that will be helpful to you throughout the school year. We hope you will visit it often.

If you do not have access to our website at home, we will be happy to provide you with a hard copy of the handbook upon request.

EARLY DISMISSAL FROM CLASS

While we discourage early dismissal of students from class because of the instructional time they lose, we realize that there are times when this is unavoidable – such as a doctor appointment. If you plan to pick your child up before the school day is over we ask that you send a note to your child's teacher. In the note please state the reason your child needs to leave school before the end of the day and what time you will come in to pick them up. Thank you

BELL SCHEDULE

Our school day starts at 9:05 a.m. and ends at 3:25 p.m. The first bell rings at 8:55. At that time, students may walk to their classrooms. The late bell rings at 9:05 at which time the school day begins. If students arrive after 9:05 they are considered tardy and parents need to sign them in to school in the office. Students will be issued a late pass before going to their classroom.

Please be aware that there is no supervision at school before 8:45. Students are not allowed in the building before this time unless they will be eating breakfast. Walkers should plan to arrive at 8:55.

BUCKLAND ALLEY

Access to Robertson through the use of Buckland Alley is prohibited. Only authorized vehicles such as maintenance or trash haulers may use this access to the school. This is not a safe location to pick up or drop off students. When driving on the streets surrounding the school or in our parking lots, please think *Student Safety First*.

Title IX Notice

Title IX is a federal law which states: "No person in the United States shall on the <u>basis of sex</u> be excluded from participation in, be denied the benefits of, or be subjected to discrimination under any educational program or activity receiving federal assistance." Manchester's Title IX coordinator is:

Terri Smith
Manchester Public Schools
45 North School Street
Manchester, CT 06042
Phone: 860-647-3595
Fax: 860-647-3327

The Title IX coordinator is responsible for monitoring the overall implementation of Title IX for the school district and coordinating the institution's compliance with Title IX prevention of sexual harassment and discrimination.

Kindergarten: Mrs. O'Coin, Mrs. Clare, Mrs. Schueler, Mrs. Polochanin

Students have been introduced to all 26 letters of the alphabet using the Fundations program. Your child was taught each letter name, its corresponding sound and its 'word.' For example, "A, apple, /a/" "W, wind, /w/."

Students are now learning to use those letter-sound relationships to read and write words by applying the new skill of blending and segmenting sounds. Students are also beginning to learn some of the high-frequency Dolch sight words. By the end of the year, the goal is for every kindergartener to be able to read each of the 40 sight words fluently.

The kindergarten students are having fun reading fiction and non-fiction texts during shared reading, read-alouds and guided reading. During those reading opportunities, the students are learning many reading strategies, such as sounding words out, looking at the picture, looking for repetitive language. The students are also learning before, during and after comprehension skills, such as making prediction, and retelling events.

Math

The kindergarten students are continuing to improve their number sense with the many activities and lessons being taught. The students are not only learning how to write numbers from 0-10 but also learning how to read number words from zero to ten as well as recognize dice dots to 10.

Moreover, the students have also been working on ordering numbers by finding the missing number (before, after or between a given number) and comparing numbers using math words: more/greater than, less/fewer than and equal to. In addition, students have been learning how to represent numbers in many ways, such a "ten frame" drawing pictures, tallies, number word etc.

Lastly, students are practicing to count to 100 by ones and by tens everyday.

Students need to be able to:

- Count objects to 20 in different arrangements (line, array, circle)
- Say numbers in order to 100 by 1's and 10's

- Pair objects with a number
- Compare groups of objects
- Write numbers 0-20
- Conserve the quantity of a group

Science/Social Studies

In November, the kindergarten students learned about the importance of Election Day, Veteran's Day and Thanksgiving through non-fiction books and group discussions. Moreover, students are reading and discussing the recent changes in the weather and how we should all be wearing weather appropriate clothing when going outside.

Upcoming Events

- ⇒Parent-Teacher Conferences: Dec.1-3rd *We are looking forward to meeting with you!
- ⇒PTA Movie Night- December 11th
- ⇒Family Music Night at Barnes & Noble- Dec. 15th
- \Rightarrow PTA Meetings (it's not too late to join): Dec.16th, Jan 13th, Feb 10th
- \Rightarrow Early Dismissal Days: Dec 1st, Dec. 2nd, Dec. 3rd, and Dec. 9th
- ⇒No School- December 24-January 3rd

Reminders

- Please make sure your child completes their monthly homework packet and returns it by the end of the month.
- Please pack a healthy snack for your child every day.
- *Please empty* your child's backpack and/or Home-School Folder *daily*.
- Please send a towel/blanket with your child each Monday. (Blankets are sent home every Friday to be washed, and returned on Monday.)
- Please send in an extra set of clothes for your child. If your child is sent home with clothes, please send in a new outfit the next day. (Please keep in mind that we are heading into the cold winter season)
- Please help your child learn to tie his/her shoelaces and to put on and zip his/her winter jacket, and put on their hat and gloves.
- * 'Tis the season for stuffy and runny noses- Boxes of Tissues are always a welcome donation, but NOT mandatory. Thank you!!

First Grade: Mrs. Parsons, Mrs. Dalton, Mrs. Beauregard, Mrs. Rawlins

What a month November has been – it certainly went by quickly! We are all hoping you had a relaxing Thanksgiving break.



It has been as busy as ever here in first grade! In Language Arts, we continue to read in our Guided Reading groups and work in our literacy centers. The focus has been on using and expanding problem-solving strategies, working on fluency, and recognizing and spelling more high-frequency words correctly.

We're also discussing and comparing story elements after reading (such as: who the characters are, where the story takes place, and when it happened).

In phonics, we are manipulating blends and digraphs, and will soon begin to focus on long vowel sounds.

In math, we continue to work on addition and subtraction facts. Any extra practice at home with addition and subtraction facts is very helpful and much appreciated.

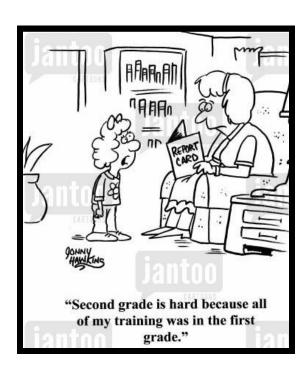


In science and social studies, we discussed Election Day and Veteran's day, and have been learning about what life was like in the colonial days. It certainly made us realize how much we have to be thankful for!

In our Social Thinking program, we have been discussing the difference between big and little feelings, and identifying and using strategies to cope with big feelings. We have also been working with students to notice the thoughts and feelings other people are having and how those thoughts and feelings are connected.



We are looking forward to meeting with you at parent conferences on December 1st, 2nd and 3rd. Your children are working extremely hard and are truly a pleasure!



2nd Grade: Mrs. Osella, Mrs. Mundy, Mr. Jones, Ms. Ruggiero

In reading, students are meeting in small reading groups and discussing books at their reading levels. Comprehension skills that are being addressed in these groups include: Retelling, summarizing and identifying the main idea of a story or passage.



In Writer's Workshop, students are learning about informational writing. This unit will be taught in conjunction with the next science unit of Solids and Liquids. Students will be writing lab reports using components such as procedure, hypothesis, problem and observations. Mrs. Gardner will be assisting us in teaching the content and helping students to write their lab reports.

In math, students are using place value to describe the values of digits in 2- and 3- digit numbers. They are writing 2- and 3-digit numbers in expanded, word, and standard form. For example, 226 can be written as: 200 + 20 + 6; 2 hundreds + 2 tens + 6 ones or two hundred twenty-six. We are also working on using base-ten blocks to compare and order three-digit numbers using the signs, <, >, and =.

Understanding place value enables children to develop efficient strategies for comparing numbers and for making calculations mentally.

Currently, the students are practicing addition and subtraction facts and strategies. Some strategies that we have been practicing are ways to make 10; doubles facts (4+4); doubles plus 1 (4+5); and the rule when 9 is an addend (make a ten, subtract one from the other addend.) They have also learned that the order of addends does not change the sum (commutative property.)

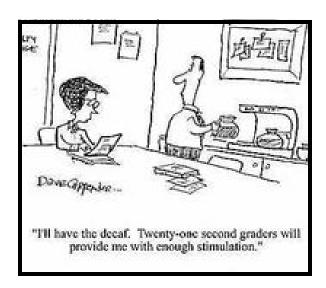
It is important for your child to see patterns of numbers whether they are counting by ones, twos, fives or tens, as well as when they use strategies. They are learning that charts and tables are a way to organize information and see patterns clearly.

Using the patterns on the hundred chart, your child should be able to tell the number before and after a given number as well as the number 10 more or less than the number



Students have also been learning to use strategies to solve math word problems. They should be able to identify key vocabulary relating to addition and subtraction. We have been working together to solve word problems using pictures, number lines, number sentences, and word explanations.

Remember to check your child's backpacks every day for important notices. Please also send in a healthy snack each day.



3rd Grade: Mr. Pepin, Mrs. Case, Mr. Moynihan

Third Grade is Gearing Up!

This month, the third grade is gearing up for **new units** in all major academic areas. We are super proud of all of the **hard work** our scholars have been putting into our previous units of study and the teachers and students alike are **fired up** and **ready to go** on our upcoming units as well. Here is what's coming down the pike in third grade:

Reader's

Reader's Workshop

Up until now, we have focused on fiction texts and the reading skills (like summarizing, predicting, and asking questions) that good readers use when reading fiction. In our **new unit**, we will be looking at how **non-fiction** texts are set up and how good readers preview a text to get an idea of its parts. We will also be talking about talking back to the text and how readers interact with the information provided in non-fiction books. Scholars will be able determine the importance of factual information and begin to categorize it as a supporting detail of a main idea, or just an interesting fact, meant to engage the reader. In this unit, we will galvanize your third grader's transition from "learning to read" to "reading to learn". How exciting!

Math Workshop

In our previous unit, we were learning lots of useful strategies and different ways of reaching correct calculations for addition and subtraction within one thousands. Our young mathematicians have really developed a deeper number sense and flexibility with numbers as a result of their hard work during this unit. Now we venture beyond our comfort zone and seek to deepen our understanding of multiplication and division!

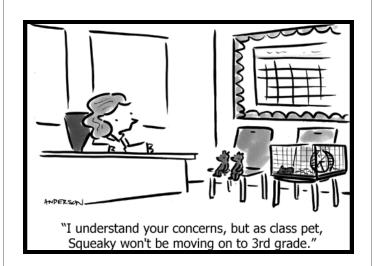
We will first introduce all of the different ways to think about and **model multiplication**. From there, we will discover the **properties** that always hold true for this operation and lastly, we

will teach **strategies** and **find patterns** that simplify the sometimes daunting multiplication tables.

Writer's Workshop

In our last unit of study, your scholars learned how to develop the **heart of a story**, how to take a small moment, and develop it into a **true story** that paints a picture with words. Scholars learned to use **dialogue** and **sensory details** to add dimension to their stories and the third grade team is proud of their growth!

Now we embark upon a new journey and begin to look at **informational writing**. Here, your scholar will have the chance to **become an expert** on a subject that truly lights them up! They will learn how to teach through their writing and **elaborate** to make their writing more informative and engaging. We will also focus on **organizing information** in a way that helps our writing flow. We all can't wait to see our students become teachers as they craft **speeches**, **articles**, and **brochures** using their tuned up informational writing skills!



4th Grade: Mrs. Blundo, Ms. Oritz & Mrs. Gatmaitan

In math, we have been working hard through our multiplication unit. Our students have been practicing their basic facts daily and have learned three different ways to multiply large numbers by a one digit number. Ask your child to tell you about all three of the ways.

Please remember to keep practicing those facts at home! All of our students have access to fast math at home through the K-12 web page and they know their usernames and passwords.



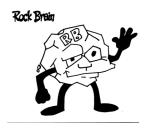
We have just wrapped up our first units in reading and writing. Their personal narratives have been completed, typed and published. Ask your child what a personal narrative is and what they wrote about.

In our reading unit, we had a chance to look at the complexity of characters and find hidden themes within different texts. As they read at home they should be able to analyze the struggles and motivations for character behaviors.



We would like to thank all the families that made it out for our social thinking workshop. Remember that it's easy to use the language and ideas at home with your child. All you need to do is remind your child how their actions make you feel and what thoughts they give you. Good or Bad.

We are starting our first character (Rock Brain). Please help your child to be flexible thinkers and remind them when they are getting stuck on needing something their way.



Our first social studies unit is maps, globes, and charts. We have been practicing how to use and read each of these. Your child should be able to tell the difference between each one and locate keys/compasses.



Remember parent conferences are coming up in December! We are looking forward to meeting each of you.

5th Grade: Mrs. Fagan, Mrs. Frye, Mrs. Kearney

Fifth Grade is looking forward to a month of fun and learning in December!

Language Arts: In December, fifth grade will be immersed in non-fiction texts. We will focus on skills such as making inferences, summarizing, and citing evidence from the texts. We will also begin writing informational pieces. Students will be researching and writing about social studies topics. Please keep up the daily reading homework. It is so important that students get in their 25 minutes of independent reading time!

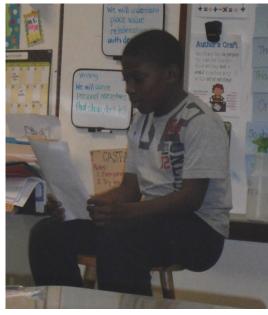
Math: This month students will be working on adding, subtracting, multiplying and dividing decimals! Students will be learning how to compare decimal numbers as well has how to apply their learning to money. We will see how decimals are used in the real world and strengthen our mental math skills to become better thinkers!

Social Studies: Students will begin to explore the foundation of our country. We will research and learn about the original 13 colonies.

Thank you for all of your support so far this school year! We look forward to seeing you at conferences! Happy Holidays Robertson Families!









Music: Ms. Grieco & Mr. Hayden

We have two very exciting performances coming up this month!

BARNES & NOBLE BOOKSELLERS

On December 15, the fifth grade chorus will be singing at the 4th annual Robertson Book Fair at Barnes and Noble in the Buckland Hills Mall. The chorus will be singing winter favorites like *Jingle Bell Rock* and *Frosty the Snowman* and will begin their performance at 6:00 p.m. A percentage of all purchases that evening will go to our school activities fund.



Second, our Robertson Winter Concert will be held on December 22 at 2:15 p.m. and 7:00 p.m. It will feature the fifth grade Orchestra, Chorus and Band.

Hope to see you all there! Have a wonderful December!

Manchester Public Library



Mary Cheney, 1855 - 1934

Mary Cheney was the daughter of Frank and Susan Cushing Cheney. Frank was one of the original eight Cheney brothers and one of the founders of the silk business here in Manchester.

Frank and Susan had five children. Mary never married and she devot-

ed her life to the town of Manchester. She lived most of her life in the large grey brick house that is now part of the South Methodist Church campus located on Main Street, Manchester.

Mary inherited a substantial estate from her parents, which allowed her time to contribute to various civic activities and organizations. She gave financial aid to families in time of hardship, contributed to young adults' scholarship funds, served on the school committee and the South Manchester Library board, gave Christmas gifts to kindergarten children and contributed both time and money to the new Memorial Hospital when it was built. She took up the hospital kitchen as her personal task and kept it supplied with equipment during the rest of her life.

Mary, as well as the rest of the Cheney family, was never one to make public the various philanthropic contributions made to Manchester. The Manchester Public Library was named after Mary Cheney. The plaque in the library's lobby reads: "This library is honored by the name of Mary Cheney. A Friend of the distressed and a comforting listener. A public spirited citizen whose interest and help were given whole heartedly to all civic and cultural activities in Manchester particularly to the work of this library."

A portrait of Miss Cheney, painted on the occasion of her twenty-first birthday, can be found at the entrance to the Reference Room.

References: "Great Oaks Memoirs of the Cheney Family" by Antoinette Cheney Crocker, 1977

"A New England Pattern, The History of Manchester, Connecticut" by William E. Buckley, 1973

- See more at:

http://library1.townofmanchester.org/index.cfm/mary-cheney-library/#sthash.BGPFbphf.dpuf

Physical Education: Ms. White & Ms. Falkowski

Kindergarten, 1st and 2nd grades:

The students finished our "Pirate Ship" game. This game involves the skills of overhand throwing, underhand throwing, and rolling. They learned how to throw over or under the volleyball net to knock over the other team's "treasure" (bowling pins).

Before Thanksgiving break we played a game called "Turkey's in the Corn Crib." This game has relay lines who race through the farm, to try to get corn from the corn crib. They have to try to make it without being tagged by the farmers! Farmers can tag them with their rake (noodle) or a pumpkin (yarn ball).

3rd, 4th and 5th grades:

Grades 3-5 students have been working very hard to increase their running endurance. Some classes are up to running 8 minutes straight! Each minute the students pass, they receive a certificate of accomplishment. This will help improve the student's PACER (running component of the Fitness Test) and get them ready for the CROSS-COUNTRY CHALLENGE in the spring!

Library: Mr. Hadge & Mrs. Courtney

As we head into the last month of 2015, we would like to congratulate the students at Robertson for showing great responsibility with their library books. Across the grade levels we are showing fewer books overdue, not returned, or lost than last year. This is a great help to the library. Keep up the good work!



The PTA-sponsored book fair will be held in the library from November 30 through December 4. Generally it will be open during school hours (9:00 a.m. – 4:00 p.m.) but on Tuesday, December 1st, the book fair will stay open until 7:00 p.m. and on Friday, December 4th, it will close early at 1:00 p.m. Proceeds from the book fair help out the PTA, provide books to classrooms, and add books to our library.

The Robertson Library has a display case that would love to show off our students' interests. Currently, we are hosting an International Currency display by Isaiah in second grade. Next up will be some trophies and medals by Damarion also in second grade. If your child has a collection they would like to share with our school community please have them pick up an application in the library.



Remember, to access many of the sites used by your children, including Tumblebook Library (usernamerobertson, password-books) please visit the MPS K-8 Resource page:

http://mpspride.org/page.cfm?p=1220.